

Message Text

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INFO USLO PEKING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 02728

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CH, VR

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS OF CHINA'S FUTURE

SUMMARY: THE QUAI'S PRINCIPAL CHINA WATCHER TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI HAD NOT BASICALLY CHANGED THE FRENCH ANALYSIS OF LAST NOVEMBER THAT TENG HSIAO-P'ING WAS THE PRINCIPAL LEADER IN CHINA (MAO NOT INCLUDED), BUT THAT THERE WAS AN OPPOSING FACTION, WHICH UNDER CURRENT GROUND RULES HAD THE RIGHT TO SNIPE AT HIM AND SOME OF HIS POLICIES. MAO'S DEATH WOULD ALSO NOT RESULT IN IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, BUT COULD EVEN NARROW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ANTAGONISTS. THE PRINCIPAL BINDING FORCE IS THE AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY TO AVOID CHAOS FROM OPEN CONFLICT. PRC OPPOSITION TO THE USSR WOULD CONTINUE, BUT THE RETURN OF THE HELICOPTER CREW COULD MEAN THE DESIRE TO REDUCE TENSION ON ONE QUESTION ONLY, THE BORDER DISPUTE. CHINESE CONCERN ABOUT THE US SEEMS DESIGNED TO JOLT THE EUROPEANS INTO GREATER DEFENSE PREPARATIONS AND TO JOLT THE US INTO REASSERTING GREATER STRENGTH AND WILL.

1. THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS BASED ON SEVERAL DIS-
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CUSSIONS WITH ROGER DUZER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA

AND THE QUAI'S PRINCIPAL AUTHORITY ON CHINA. DUZER ACCOMPANIED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO CHINA IN NOVEMBER, BUT WAS ADDRESSING THE POST-CHOU SITUATION ALSO ON THE BASIS OF HIS OWN READINGS OF THE CHINESE SOURCES AND RECENT REPORTS FROM PEKING. DUZER'S VIEWS MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN ACCORD WITH THE FRENCH REPORTING FROM PEKING, BUT THEY ARE PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST INFLUENTIAL VIEWS BEING EXPRESSED WITHIN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

2. TENG'S PREEMINENCE AND INTERNAL DISPUTES. DUZER'S VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN CHINA HAD NOT BASICALLY CHANGED SINCE THE NOIVILLE-HABIB CONVERSATION OF EARLY NOVEMBER. CHOU'S DEATH WAS ALREADY ANTICIPATED AT THAT TIME, AND DUZER CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT CHOU'S DEPARTURE FROM THE SCENE WILL NOT GREATLY CHANGE THE SITUATION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THERE CONTINUE TO BE TWO BASIC CONSTITUENCIES, TWO BASIC FORCES WHICH ARE CONTENDING WITHIN THE CHINESE HEIRARCHY. WHAT PREVENTS OPEN CONFLICT IS THE VIEW OF BOTH GROUPS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT REPEAT THE STRUGGLE WHICH RESULTED IN THE DISORGANIZATION UNDER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. DUZER FELT THAT BOTH SIDES HAD REDISCOVERED THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTY DISCIPLINE, A VIRTUE CELEBRATED PRIOR TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. A TOTAL BREAKDOWN OF CONTROL WOULD HARM "BOTH SIDES" AND CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR CHINA IN ITS INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS. BOTH ANTAGONISTS THEREFORE ACCEPT RULES FOR THE STRUGGLE WHICH PERMIT THEM TO USE THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE APPARATUS WHICH ARE UNDER THEIR INFLUENCE TO SCORE POINTS AGAINST THE OTHER AND TO ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THAT FACTION'S POWER. BOTH GROUPS WILL AVOID ACTIONS WHICH WOULD CAUSE A BREAKDOWN OF "UNITY" AND INTRODUCE CHAOS. DUZER THINKS THAT MOST OF THE CAMPAIGNS, EVEN THE EARLIER CRITICISM OF CONFUCIUS, THE DISCUSSION OF SHUI HU AND NOW THE EDUCATION DEBATE WERE NOT REALLY SERIOUS CAMPAIGNS, AS THE CONTINUING APPEARANCES OF EDUCATION MINISTER CHOU JUNG-HSIN SEEMS TO CONFIRM. THE REAL STRUGGLE IS NOT ABOUT EDUCATION; THE CAMPAIGN IS A DEVIOUS WAY FOR ONE SIDE

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TO PUT THE OTHER SIDE IN GREATER DIFFICULTY. EACH SIDE ATTEMPTS TO WHIP UP A CAMPAIGN WHICH NEITHER SIDE CAN BE OPPOSED TO IN ITS MOST SIMPLE FORMULATION, BUT WHICH SERVES TO DISCOMFIT THE OTHER SIDE.

3. DUZER CONTINUES TO CONSIDER THAT TENG HSAIO-P'ING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE IN CHINA -- OBVIOUSLY EXCLUDING MAO. ALTHOUGH TENG DOES NOT AND

PROBABLY WILL NOT GET THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTY
POSITION, HIS ROLE IN THE PARTY, ADMINISTRATION AND
ARMY IS SECURE. HE AND HIS FACTION WILL BE SUBJECTED

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TO HARASSMENT, BUT THE OTHER SIDE WILL NOT "RISK
TRAGEDY" BY AN OVERT ATTACK. ON THE OTHER HAND, JUST
AS CHOU EN-LAI DID NOT ELIMINATE THE "OPPOSITION" SO
TENG WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITHIN THE NEW RULES OF THE
GAME UNDER THE SNIPING OF THE SO-CALLED RADICALS.
DUZER THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT THE DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI
WOULD HAVE NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL
POLICIES. EVERYONE HAS KNOWN OF CHOU'S PENDING DEATH
AND IT WAS APPARENTLY AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE A
PROBLEM AS CHOU TRIED TO ASSURE IN HIS POLITICAL TESTA-
MENT.

4. AGAIN, IF MAO WERE TO DIE, THE SHOCK WOULD BE TOO
GREAT FOR ANY IMMEDIATE POLITICAL DISTURBANCES. IT IS
TRUE THAT WHILE LIVING, MAO IS A SACRED IMAGE AND
"GENRO" (ELDER STATESMAN) AND CERTAINLY THINGS WILL BE

DONE IN HIS NAME PARTICULARLY IF HE HAS MADE SOME CRYPTIC UTTERANCE WHICH CAN SUPPORT A PROGRAM. ONCE DEAD, HOWEVER, THE SACRED IMAGE WILL NO LONGER BE EVEN AN INDIRECT POLITICAL FACTOR. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT MAO'S DEATH HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR IN A SCENARIO WORKED
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OUT BETWEEN THE CONTENDING FACTIONS. IN FACT, THERE WERE NO DOUBT SEVERAL SCENARIOS TO BE IMPLEMENTED DEPENDING ON WHEN EACH DIED, INCLUDING IN WHAT ORDER. IT IS NOT QUITE CLEAR WHAT KIND OF PARTY SUCCESSION MIGHT OCCUR ON THE DEATH OF MAO, BUT DUZER THINKS THE ACCESSION OF THE CURRENT NO. 2, WANG HUNG-WEN, TO THE POST OF CHAIRMAN WAS "IMPOSSIBLE." THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY, BUT A COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP BY THE VICE-CHAIRMEN.

5. DUZER FEELS THAT TENG HSAIO-P'ING HAS A CONSENSUS OF APPROXIMATELY 60, PERHAPS MORE, FAVORING HIM. AN OPPOSITION OF 40, INCLUDING LUKEWARMS AS WELL AS DIEHARD OPPONENTS, IS NONETHELESS A VERY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FACTOR, ONE WHICH CAN EXPLAIN THE WRITTEN ATTACKS WHICH APPEAR TO BE DIRECTED AT TENG HIMSELF. DUZER THINKS THAT AS TIME GOES ON -- TAKING MAO WITH IT -- THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FORGING OF A GREATER SOLIDARITY RATHER THAN A WIDENING OF THE BREACH BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS. THERE COULD BE A RALLYING OF THE CURRENT OPPONENTS SINCE ALL CHINESE NOW APPARENTLY ACCEPT THE INTERNAL ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET UNION AS THE KEYSTONE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY. THE CURRENT SOCIAL PROGRAM CONTAINS ELEMENTS OF "REVISIONISM" WHICH MAY PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR ARGUMENTS AMONG THE LEADERS, BUT THESE DISPUTES ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE AREAS OF AGREEMENT ON ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES. IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER THAT IN THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEAR PERIOD THERE COULD BE AN EVOLUTION OF GREATER UNITY. HOWEVER AT THE END OF THAT PERIOD CONFLICTS COULD BREAK OUT AND BE VERY SERIOUS, PARTICULARLY IF IT APPEARS THAT THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM IS RESULTING IN TOO SLOW A RATE OF DEVELOPMENT.

6. PRC FOREIGN POLICY. DUZER DOES NOT ANTICIPATE GREAT CHANGES IN THE POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION. EVEN IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SOLVE THE CURRENT FRONTIER QUESTION CHINESE CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS TOO MANIFOLD TO BE SHELVED. CHINA WILL CONTINUE TO COMPETE WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN THE THIRD
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WORLD AND WILL OPPOSE SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IN THE FAR EAST, THE INDIAN OCEAN AND EVEN AFRICA. RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE PRC WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT ANY LEADERSHIP MUST LIMIT THE EXTENT OF THE RELATIONS. THE RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE AS AN ELEMENT OF THE COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE SOVIET UNION, ARE ALSO IMPORTANT.

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7. CONTRADICTIONS IN PRC POLICIES. DUZER NOTED THAT THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP HAS NOT YET BEEN WILLING TO DRAW THE CONCLUSIONS IMPLICIT IN THE POLICIES DERIVED FROM PRC OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET UNION. IN PARTICULAR CHINESE RELATIONS WITH THE THIRD WORLD, FOR EXAMPLE, 8TS ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA, ARE HAMPERED BY OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIETS AND "ASSOCIATION WITH IMPERIALISM".

AT SOME POINT THE CHINESE WILL HAVE TO BE MORE CONSISTENT AND MAKE SOME OF THE DIFFICULT FOREIGN POLICY CHOICES WITH THEIR ATTENDANT IDEOLOGICAL AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS.

8. RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. DURING THE RECENT FRENCH CONVERSATIONS IN PEKING (SAUVAGNARGUES' VISIT IN NOVEMBER) TENG SPOKE WITH CONCERN ABOUT THE UNITED STATES, A CONCERN WHICH HE HAD NOT EXPRESSED DURING HIS VISIT TO FRANCE IN MAY. IN THE EARLIER CONVERSATION, TENG HAD EXPRESSED THE FAMILIAR THEME OF THE DANGER OF WAR, THE SOVIET UNION'S HAVING REPLACED THE UNITED STATES AS THE STRONGEST MILITARY POWER ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONVENTIONAL LEVEL AND THE U.S. LOSING ITS NUCLEAR ADVANTAGE. DURING THE NOVEMBER CONVERSATIONS, TENG LAID PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE DECLINE IN U.S. MORALE. IN ADDITION TO THE SAME THEMES CONCERNING THE MILITARY SITUATION, TENG HARPED ON THE LACK OF AMERICAN DETERMINATION AND WILL TO OPPOSE THE SOVIET UNION. HE REFERRED TO THE HELSINKI AS A "MUNICH" AND WARNED THE FRENCH OF AN AMERICAN "DUNKIRK" WHEN THE AMERICANS MIGHT WELL CUT AND RUN FROM EUROPE. HE STRONGLY WARNED FRANCE, AND THROUGH FRANCE, EUROPE NOT TO COUNT ON THE UNITED STATES. (ACCORDING TO ANOTHER SOURCE, TENG EVEN TOLD SAUVAGNARGUES THAT THE PRC WAS HOPING FOR REAGAN'S NOMINATION AND ELECTION.)

9. DUZER SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE CONTEXT THAT TENG EXPECTED --AND WANTED-- HIS WARNING TO BE REPEATED NOT ONLY TO FRANCE'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS BUT ALSO TO THE UNITED STATES. TENG OBVIOUSLY HAD TWO GOALS IN SPEAKING IN THIS FASHION: (1) TO URGE THE EUROPEANS TO MAKE A GREATER EFFORT IN DEFENSE MATTERS AND (2) TO MAKE THE U.S. UNDERSTAND HOW WEAK CHINA PERCEIVES U.S. DETERMINATION TO BE. TENG'S PURPOSE WAS THEREFORE MUCH LESS TO DESCRIBE THE CHINESE VIEW OF THE REALITIES THAN TO SHOCK EUROPE AND THE U.S. INTO ACTIONS FAVORING CHINA.

10. PRC RELEASE OF SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW. DUZER WAS AT FIRST AS STARTLED AS EVERYONE ELSE BY THE SUDDEN CHINESE RELEASE OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTER AND ITS CREW. HE HAD AT FIRST ALSO CONSIDERED THE VIEW, WHICH HAD BEEN EXPRESSED TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN PARIS BY A DEPARTMENT OFFICER, THAT THE SIGNAL WAS DIRECTED MORE TO THE UNITED STATES THAN THE SOVIET

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UNION. DUZER HAS NOW COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE AND THE SOVIET UNION WAS THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF THE GESTURE. HE THOUGHT IT A MANEUVER, LIKE THE SUDDEN CHOU EN-LAI/KOSYGIN MEETING IN 1969, TO JOLT THE SOVIET UNION AND TO ATTEMPT TO REACH SOME DECREASE IN CONFLICT OVER THE BORDERS. DUZER THOUGHT IT LIKELY THE CHINESE COULD WISH TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CONFLICT ALONG THE FRONTIER WHILE MAINTAINING OVERALL OPPOSITION TO THE USSR. HE WAS INITIALLY PUZZLED BY THE CHINESE ADMISSION THAT THEY HAD BEEN WRONG, BUT HAD FINALLY CONCLUDED THAT THIS WAS THE CHINESE WAY OF TRYING TO PUT THE SOVIETS EVEN MORE AT A DISADVANTAGE BY ADMITTING THEIR ERROR AND TREATING THE SOVIET PILOTS LIKE DISTINGUISHED VISITORS. BY ASIAN STANDARDS THIS WOULD AGGRANDIZE THOSE WHO MADE THE GESTURE AND WOULD POINT OUT THE HIGH MORAL POSITION OF CHINA, COMPARED TO THE SOVIET UNION. THE CONTINUATION OF THE ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA SHOWED CLEARLY THAT THIS ONE GESTURE SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF A DECREASE IN PRC OPPOSITION TO THE USSR. THE SIGNAL TO THE U.S., THEREFORE, WHILE POSSIBLY ADVANTAGEOUS,

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COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS A SIGNAL TO THE U.S. OF
CHINA'S BELIEF IT HAS A VALID OPTION OF IMPROVING
RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.
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